

Ch. 16 – daily "Non-Duality & Science" blogs

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Reality 123

Consciousness, without anything appended to it, is the *Natural State* of the Self. Of all one's Ideas & Perceptions, which of them can be said to actually be one's True Nature ? Though one may regard the clearer, more spiritual *ideas* as closer than the cloudier *ideas*, the clearest *ideas* being reflections of something beyond Perception & Conception, none of the *ideas* are actually the Consciousness itself.

Consciousness, which is the nature of the Self transcends all *ideas*. Consciousness is just so & always so. Therefore, to abide in the Natural State of the Self, to know the ever-present nature of Existence & Consciousness, one should inquire to know *What* is ever present without a break & for all time. Such is to be distinguished from *what* "is not always" is not one's *Natural State*. This is because *that* is not actually of one's essential Existence. *What* is not always ? Material things & the World, the Body, Sense Perceptions, thoughts, & the Ego – all these are transient.

Freedom from Delusion is the *Natural State*. Delusion consists of the confusion regarding the Self & the not-Self. All such is a case of mis-identification. It is confusion regarding Existence & an *object*, including the Body, or an Idea, or between Consciousness & a thought, or notion.

Such mis-identification is confusion regarding the *always* & the temporary. It is non-discrimination of the Real & the unreal. Realization is Freedom from Delusion & not a new attainment or acquisition.

Freedom is realized by perceiving that the Delusion is but a thin *vener* of assumptions that can be dissolved because they are false, unreal, & only conceptual – they are not realities.

The Self is always free & unaffected by any Illusion. Self-Inquiry into one's True Nature yields *Abidance* in this *Natural*, Real State. In practice, Self-Inquiry is the dissolution of belief in false definitions attributed to one's identity. Such definitions yield the Delusion of the Self being distinct from the Absolute, of one's Identity being a separate Individual, or Ego-entity. The *relinquishment* of these false definitions, or mis-identifications, is essential in knowing the Self.

Self-Knowledge is deeply *Knowing* the real significance of "I". It is the determination of one's actual Identity. Self-Inquiry consists of *sifting* what is one's Real Identity from what is not actually one's Identity. The Real Identity is infinite Consciousness. One should distinguish the concept of "I" or "I"–notion, & what "I" really is, the Self.

If there is one Self, why should there be this distinguishing in the practice of Self-Inquiry? This Discrimination is only for the purpose of the elimination of the unreal from one's experience. It is neither an end in itself, nor a destruction of anything actually real. Between the Real & the unreal, there is no division, as the Real is that which alone is. And the unreal does not exist at all.

Self-Inquiry involves the Discernment of what is truly the Self & the cessation of the confounding of it with what is unnatural, or not really "I". By Self-Knowledge, one finds that one is not a limited, Individual self; nor are there two "I"-s in the same one being. All the limitations are entirely based on the concept of an Individual, or Ego as one's Identity. One should see the "I" as pervading the limitation, as the root of the limitation, as being falsely strengthened by adherence to the limitation, as the *thread* running through the core of the limitation, & as the *thread* tying all the limitations together into a *pseudo-self*.

The vicious circle of limitations so conceived & the Ego form *Samsara*. One should perceive that there is an unmodified Absolute Self & then inquire to realize such as one's true Identity. There is only one real Self, whether called the "*Supreme Self*," the "*true Self*," the "*Absolute*," or just simply "*the Self*".

The Self is unmodified Existence. The supposed "other self" is called "Ego," "Mind," "Individual," "Soul," etc. Ramana Maharshi refers to the Ego as the "I"–thought, "I"–notion, "I"–mode, or "*aham vritti*". If "I" is apparently modified into, or defined as something it is not, the resultant view is the "I"–notion or Ego. Though the Self is Formless Being & Infinite Consciousness, to conceive of an *idea* of Individuality, is the "I"–thought or "*aham vritti*". This is not the production of another. It is only an assumption that proves to be false upon Self-Inquiry. Finding its unreality is the true significance of "Ego-death".



Reality 124

The "I"-notion, which is the cause of Bondage & Suffering, comes & goes. It is always associated with Form, gross or subtle. All forms are transient & are actually unreal. The forms should, by thorough Self-Inquiry, be determined as not truly "I". The "I" itself depends on Delusions of Form in order to appear, for it has no form of its own. The Real "I" or the Self, is free, happy within, & of a forever unblemished perfection. The Self always abides, is Formless, & is non-dependent on any Form, gross or subtle, non-dependent on the Body or the Mind. Self-Realization is *Abidance* as the "I"-less Self. Self-Inquiry is the pursuit of Identity, of "I", *to its core*.

If one sees only the surface, one assumes a limited "I". If one assumes a limited "I" one attaches oneself to superficial forms. If one pursues *to the core*, one finds the limitless "I". If one looks from the limitless Self, one is free & at Peace.

Self-Knowledge starts with one's attempt to know the Truth. Self-Knowledge is the very substance, or means, of spiritual practice. At the end, spiritual practice is absorbed in, or shines as, the Truth itself. In the Teachings given by Ramana Maharshi & other wise Sages, Knowledge is pre-eminent. It is the way to destroy Ignorance & all its attendant Bondage & Suffering. Knowledge is the destruction, or *transcendence*, of the Duality of Ignorance, & it is the elimination of multiple states for Consciousness.

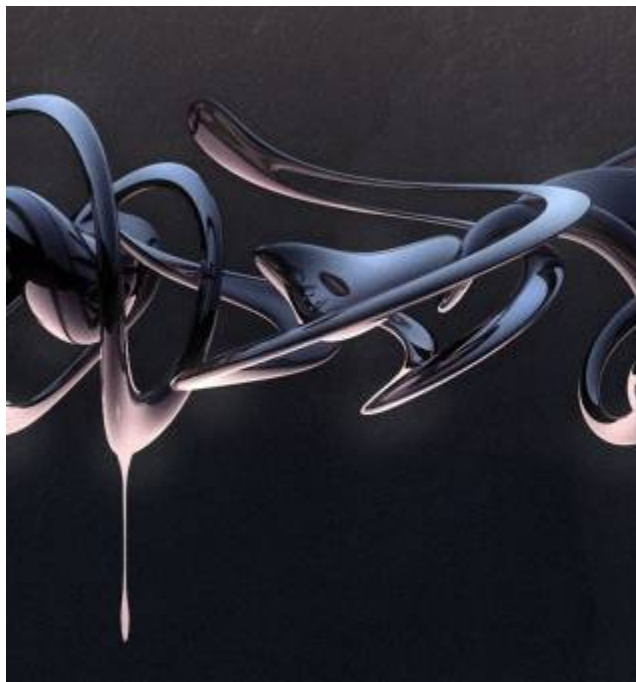
That is, Knowledge reveals Consciousness pure as it is, free of differences & Duality. Knowledge is the precise clarity of understanding *what one really is*. Knowledge is transcendent of all thought.

Knowledge is experienced as the means to dissolve Ignorance. And then Knowledge itself is abandoned in pure Consciousness. That is, the Path of Knowledge becomes Self-Knowledge, which is one with Existence.

Knowledge alone destroys Ignorance. Only Self-Knowledge avoids fall into the 4 dualistic approaches to practice & Realization, namely: *Production, Acquisition, Transformation, & Purification*. Self-Knowledge is the actual experience of the Spiritual Practice or Path. Self-Knowledge is the depth of Self-Inquiry & is the actual Knowledge experienced of any advancing on a Path of Knowledge.

Self-Inquiry does not fall into any of the Dualities, inherent in those 4 approaches [*Production, Acquisition, Transformation, & Purification*], that are dualisms that one is trying to transcend. The liberating aspect of any spiritual experience ever has lies in the "*Knowledge—essence*".

Self-Knowledge can be with or without its mental & physical surroundings. Self-Knowledge is the essential *key*, the real substance, of profound spiritual experience. Only Self-Knowledge deals with the ever-present Reality, which is not in Time or Space & such. Self-Knowledge brings about the cessation of ignorant views, such as that "*the World is real*", or "*I-am-the-Body*" or "*I-am the-Mind*" or "*I-am an Ego-entity*."



Reality 125

Though one may engage in spiritual *activities* that can assist him, the Knowledge, itself is not a physical *action*. Though *speaking* about spiritual things is very beneficial, the Knowledge, itself is not a *verbal* activity. Though using the *Mind* in a spiritual manner is excellent for spiritual practice, the highest Knowledge, itself, is not a *mental* activity.

The deepening of Knowledge by Self-Inquiry is the essential spiritual practice. Rather than a "*doing*", deep Self-Inquiry is a "*knowing*". Self-Inquiry is not a set way of thinking, but a rather the deepening

understanding of *who one is*, free from one's thoughts. This is what makes Self-Inquiry unlimited in its efficacy toward the elimination of mis-identifications & erroneous concepts.

Certainty of Knowledge is attained with the coincidence of the 4 *Proofs of Vedanta*: (1) the revelation of the most ancient *Scriptures*; (2) the tradition of more recent *Teachings* as heard from realized Sages; (3) discerning reason inclusive of *Self-Inquiry*, & (4) *Direct Experience*. When all 4 coincide, one's Knowledge, or experience, is on solid ground & is of the Impersonal, Eternal Truth.

Self-Knowledge is Freedom from Attachment, as well as from mis-identification. Mis-identification is the confounding of the Self with an *idea*. If the Self is confounded with the *concept of "I"*, an Ego appears. If Consciousness is confounded with a thought, a separate Mind appears. When Existence-Consciousness is confounded with the Body, the sense of being an embodied *being* appears. When the same confusion occurs between the Bliss of the Self & objects, attachment appears.

Attachment is a mistake regarding the source of Happiness, Peace, & such. Attachment is always a feeling of dependence on *something* or *someone else* for the Happiness, Peace, etc. Those are actually of one's own True Self. Attachment can manifest as *craving* or as *aversion*, as the *desire* for something to be or the *fear* that it will not be.

Attachment, or dependence on what is *external* is in either case the same. Discerning the cause of the Attachment, one can see that what one actually desires is always an *inner* State. Attachment is a Superimposition of objects & such on Bliss. Or it may be regarded as the projection of Happiness outwardly on the objects & such. Detachment results from clear Discernment of the *inner* State desired & the Source of that *inner* State, which can only be the Bliss of the Self.

Superimposition is the confounding of the not-Self with the Self, the unreal with the Real. Specifically, it is imagining the attributes of the unreal, or the not-Self to be those of the Real Self. The unreal is superimposed upon Reality, not upon nothing. There is real Existence, which is infinite, eternal, & formless. That is the Self. In Ignorance, one superimposes Form, the transient, & the limited upon it. Thus, Ignorance yields Bondage & Suffering. Knowledge liberates one from Suffering & Bondage by destroying Ignorance, like light "destroying" darkness, revealing its insubstantiality, unreality, or nonexistence.

The *attributes* of the World, the Body, the Senses, & thought or the Mind are superimposed on the Self the Reality. So is also the Ego—"I". Self-Inquiry removes this Superimposition, this mis-identification, thus revealing Knowledge. Self-Inquiry is the Discernment that what is not the Self, the unreal, is not the Self, is unreal. This Discernment leaves the *residuum* of true Existence-Consciousness-Bliss self-revealed.

If what is passing, arising & ceasing, appearing & disappearing, seems Real or to be oneself, this is the *transient* superimposed on the Eternal. If what is *objective*, the Known, seems to be Real or oneself, this is Superimposition of the *objective* upon the *Subjective*, the inert upon Consciousness itself.

If something *produced* by sensations or thoughts, & not present otherwise, seems to be real or oneself, this is Superimposition of the *produced*, or an effect, upon the Innate. If something acquired that one does not have always, for all time, which can be lost, if this seems to be Real or oneself, this is, again, Superimposition of the fleeting upon the Eternal, the accidental upon the Innate.

If *that* which is just the effect or transformation of some other unreal thing, such as repetitive thoughts – these constitute that unreal *condition* or *mode* of Mind. Mind, or the Body & the Senses give a particular sensation or the idea of seemingly bodily location of the Self. If these seem to be Real or oneself, this is Superimposition of Birth upon the Unborn, the *created* upon the Uncreated. However, to know such Superimposition as such, & not as the permanent, real, actual, interior identity – this dissolves the Superimposition, as Ignorance vanishes in Knowledge.



Reality 126

He who is under the influence of Superimposition of the Body on the Self, which is actually of the nature of Existence-Consciousness – he feels that he is the Body, that he is born, dying, & such; that he is of such a size or appearance; that he acts, he is well or sick, afflicted by Pleasure & Pain; that he is entrapped within the Body, & that he is endowed with a Body & its characteristics. He who attains Liberation from all that Superimposition, or Ignorance, by Knowledge. he alone realizes within himself, “*I am bodiless, Unborn, deathless, free & unafflicted, conditionless, attributeless, & locationless.*”

He who is under the influence of Superimposition of the World on the Self, which is actually of the nature of Existence-Consciousness – he feels that the World is real, external, always there, that it holds his Identity, holds his Happiness, that the World is his experience, & that he is affected by whatever occurs in the World.

He who attains Liberation from this Superimposition, or Ignorance, by Knowledge alone realizes within himself, *"There is no World, there is nothing external. The World it is not always there, or it is never really there,"* He realizes: *"I am unaffected & unmoved by the World, my Identity is not of the World, my Happiness is within as the Self, & my experience is that of the Self."*

He who is under the influence of Superimposition of the Senses on the Self feels that the Truth is something *sensed*. Spiritual experience of Self-Realization will also seem *sensed*. The Senses seem to show him what exists. If the Senses are *pleased*, so is he *pleased*. If the Senses are not *pleased*, so is he not *pleased*.

He believes that the illusory *here-&now* of the Sense experience is the Reality. He who attains Liberation from this Superimposition, or Ignorance, by Self-Knowledge alone he realizes within himself, *"Reality is directly known without the Senses as intermediaries, & the Senses can never reveal anything of my real Self."* He realizes: *"I am blissfully free of & unaffected by the Senses; I am the Eternal & Infinite, & in no way limited to a 'transient' now moment & the 'minuscule Here in Space,'"*

He realizes: *"I am beyond all Space & Time, Here & There, Now & Then, & I abide as the Transcendent Self forever."* He who is under the influence, of Superimposition of thought on the Self, thinks that thought is the determination Of reality. Such is the basic component of Illusion: that one assumes that *"what one thinks is so"*. This Superimposition is the projection of the Reality of Being & the Knowing of Consciousness upon the inert, the insubstantial, & the non-existent. so that the Superimposition produces the notion, *"I know"*.

When this Superimposition is destroyed, one frees oneself of thought & realizes *non-thought* Knowledge. He who attains Liberation from this Superimposition, or Ignorance, by Knowledge alone – he realizes within, *"I am free from thought. Whatever is thought of is not I. I am free from ideas & modes of all kinds. Thoughts describe only other thoughts & not Reality. Thought depends entirely on me, but I never on thought."*

Thus, he abides blissfully free of all that could ever be conceived. Who can comprehend his state ? The Self alone knows itself. Thus, the connection of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss with what is *objective* results in Attachment to the World & the Senses.

The connection of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss with a form results in mis-identification with the Body. The connection of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss with thought results in mis-identification with the Mind. Such connections are a product of Delusion & can never really be the true Identity or Reality.



Reality 127

Superimposition of the "I"-notion, or Ego, upon the Self is also delusion. But the Ego depends on the other super-impositions to give it apparent Form. The Real Self with super-impositions appears as if an Ego—"I". However, it is the "I" that possesses all the super-impositions, not the real untouched, immutable Self.

"For whom are all these super-impositions ?" "Who is it that knows ?" Such should be the Self-Inquiry to realize the Existence, the Consciousness, that is attributeless. This Self-Inquiry yields the fruit of Knowledge that is beyond thought, that is non-dependent on thought, that does not require thought to create or sustain it, the Knowledge that is One with Being, the Knowledge that is Consciousness itself, the liberating Knowledge of the Self.

Knowledge & Being are One. This means that the real nature of Knowledge is Consciousness alone. The Knowledge is not something known, not divided between a Knower & something Known or unknown, & not divided into the triple division of Knower, Knowing, & Known. This is Absolute Knowledge.

To realize the Self Consciousness alone, one must distinguish between sensory perception & Consciousness, between thought & Consciousness, & between modes & States of Mind [*Waking, Dream, & Deep Dreamless Sleep*] & Consciousness.

One must comprehend the ever-present nature of Consciousness & perceive that Consciousness never contracts or expands or becomes modified in any other way. What is to be known is its non-*objective*, Timeless, Spaceless, attributeless nature.

For the Realization of the Self, the Self-Inquiry should not be confined to only one mental state. To perceive what is truly the Reality, the Self, then all experience should be considered. If one regards Consciousness as merely the Waking State, one will reduce his view of Consciousness to mere mental & corresponding sensory functions.

Examination of the 3 States [*Waking, Dream, & Deep Dreamless Sleep*] reveals the continuity of Consciousness & its Formless Nature. The Self is revealed to be unembodied & not any mental mode or individual character. All experience depends on, & is composed of, Consciousness, yet Consciousness depends on none & is also thus revealed.

Liberation is not merely a blank mind or lack of sensory experience. When the Senses & thinking stop in Meditation. All notions about the Absolute & the Self are relinquished.

Notions about the Absolute are such as that it is different from oneself, or *objective*. Notions about the Self are such as that it is endowed with rage & misery, that it is changeful, material, embodied, defined by thought, or endowed with Individuality.

For Knowledge, the super-imposition of *jiva*-hood (concept of Individuality) is removed from *Atman* (the Self) & *Isvara*-hood (idea of the Lord, of God) from *Brahman*. Upon such removal of super-imposition, or Ignorance, one realizes the Identity, as declared in the Upanishad "*Tat tvam asi*, That you are".

Sri Ramana Maharshi revealed in his Teachings, which are most direct & immediate, that if the Self remains undefined, it is Non-Dual & it alone is. Therefore, one should know the Self.

The Knowledge of Reality, which is the Realization of the Self & the Realization of the Absolute, is attained by the direct path of true Knowledge – by liberating oneself from the mis-identification with what is not the Self.

When the real nature of the Ego, considered as the non-Self, is seen, it invariably proves to be non-existent, for it was by mis-identification that it seemed to ever appear. Blissful & eternal is the Real Self.

One should regard as Real only that which has no begriming or end, is ever existent, is ever Transcendent of all that has form,



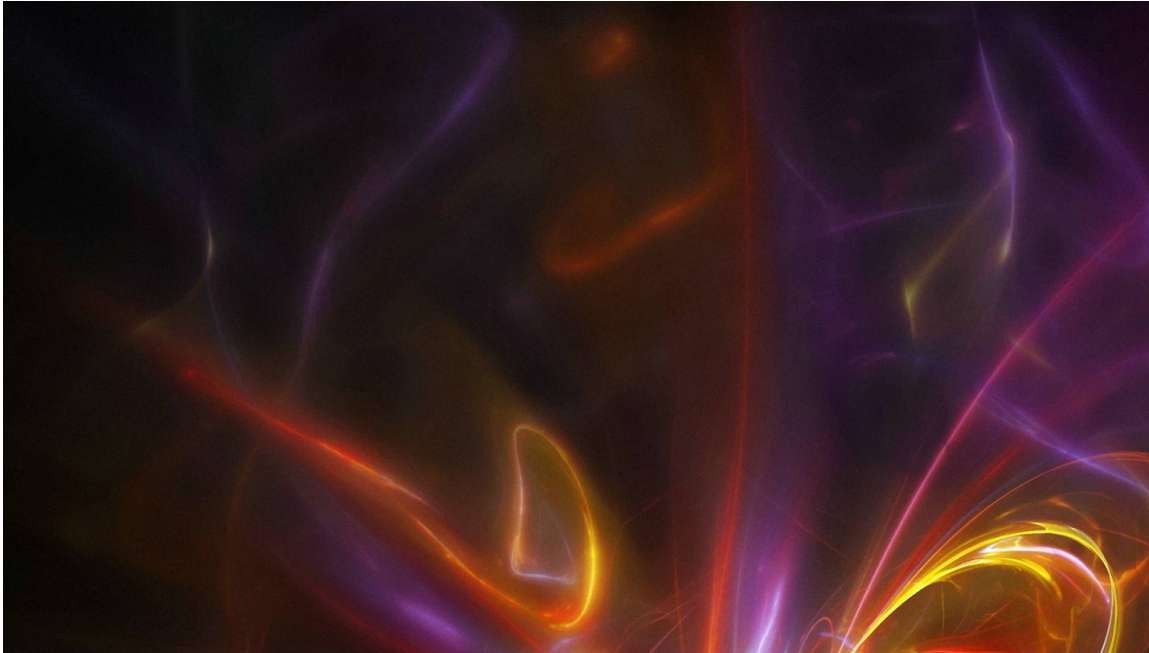
Reality 128

Knowledge reveals the real abiding place of Happiness. Though to have recognized the presence of Suffering in Life will be desirous of removing it permanently. They will search for an answer in Knowledge & do not expect Happiness to be found in a worldly manner. Such a worldly manner would be as in sensory things or in the moods & emotions of a wavering Mind.

Aspirants who want to be free of desire, who are not content with mere accidental let– ups in Suffering caused by Ignorance, who are in search of spiritual Bliss & Peace. They desire understanding how it is that Happiness shines forth at some times. They yearn to have Happiness abide knowingly & permanently. They understand that the way to accomplish this permanent abidance in Happiness is by Knowledge, & not by any other means. They should determine with certainty the source of Happiness.

Determining the unitary motivation in Life, one becomes free from the idea of multiple motives taking one in multiple directions. Accomplishing this recognition, one concentrates the searching of one's Mind in the direction that is truly *within*. This prompts a yearning for Self-Knowledge & provides the motivation for Self-Inquiry into the Self. The determination about Happiness is by Self-Inquiry into Bliss that leads one into a Self-Inquiry into Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. This is because Existence-Consciousness-Bliss is the Nature of the one Reality, the one Self.

Meditation upon & absorption of the discerning Knowledge regarding the nature of Happiness results in a steadfast motivation for Self-Inquiry to realize the Self. There is also perception of the one motivation behind all kinds of searching, through all kinds of experience. There is Detachment from worldly things & cessation of worldly desire. There results steady access to the inner source of Happiness.



Reality 129

The Self is in truth perfectly full of Bliss. The imperturbable Peace, the ineffable & complete Happiness is quite beyond any sensation, or mode of mind. This Happiness is pervaded by a silent Knowledge of Eternal, uncreated perfection – this is known as Bliss, *Ananda*. To realize this Bliss as it is, one should comprehend the nature of Happiness, examining it in 3 ways: (1) desire, (2) experience, & the (3) source. By knowing that desire one attains recognition of the basic current underlying all desires, all hopes, & all kinds of experience, be such physical, subtle (*astral*), or mental.

With this recognition of the True Nature of desire, one uses that powerful "current" in an un-diffused manner to abide as the Self. This recognition causes one to become one – pointed in the quest of the Self. By Knowledge of one's experience, one of attains Liberation of the experience of Happiness from the Delusion of limitation of it by form & the ability to experience Bliss directly without delay. One must merge with that which is Bliss itself, free of Duality. If the experience of Happiness is to be full, it must endure. If Happiness is to endure, one must become one with it. By knowing the source of happiness, one becomes & remains completely detached. Detachment is itself Freedom & is blissful. By such Knowledge one is liberated from the external, the inconsequential, & the unreal. One comprehends the reason for Self-Inquiry to know the Self.

The desire for Happiness comes from deep within. That desire is an intuition that Bliss is one's Natural State. This Bliss includes Peace with no disturbance, Freedom with no bondage, and perfection with nothing incomplete. The source of the desire for Happiness is not from external phenomena of any kind. The desire does not derive from objects, circumstances, other beings, & so on. There is therefore nothing *alluring*. The desire itself is not a bodily sensation. The desire is not particular thoughts, though particular thoughts constituting images in the Mind may appear in the manifestation of the desire. The desire itself is simply the urge from within to be in the Natural State of limitless Bliss. The intensity of the desire is continually surging forth. That Desire cannot be subdued, & the attempt to do so would merely be an unsuccessful one to fulfill the desire. The desire can be fulfilled by Self-Realization which is Abidance as Bliss itself. Bliss is of the very nature of the Self, and not & the Self is truly without any

desire. When the Self is not known &, by Delusion, the 1st Suffering becomes possible. Then there is the appearance of an "I" & the Natural State seems to be lost. That very Bliss of the Self manifests itself than as the intuition of one's natural, True State & this appears as the desire for Happiness.

The experience of Happiness should be comprehended in Wisdom so that one does not superimpose what is not actually the experience of Happiness upon that Happiness. The Joy felt anywhere, ever, is the shining of the Self. Yet in Ignorance, such apparent feeling is accompanied by super-imposition of inert, unreal forms upon the experience. When the experience is accompanied by the Delusion of super-imposition of forms, it appears as if momentary, limited & dependent when the experience is without such Delusion, the Self itself shines as vast, unlimited Bliss which is self-existent.

Happiness is always a subjective experience in which the Ego diminishes along with its attendant notions. Thus because the Truth always destroys the Ego & those notions, it is by the Revelation of their unreality that the ultimate Subject is left unconcealed. Self-Inquiry to know the Self thus yields the most the profound Happiness.



To set the experience of Happiness free of limitation, the experiencer must be free of limitation. That is the experiencer must be free of mis-identification with form. Then one abides in infinite, unending, intense Bliss which is so intense that even the memory of suffering & sorrow is erased. All the super-imposed forms are of a sensory or mental characteristic. The experience of Happiness is not a sensation, such as seeing, hearing, & so on. It is the experience of Happiness is not a thought or a collection of thoughts. The experience of Happiness is of a formless nature, shining at the same depth from which the desire springs, at the very Source of Happiness itself.

The Source of the desire source of the experience of Happiness are one & the same that source is within,. Unrealized, the Source manifests as the desire. Realized, it shines as Bliss itself. Realization means knowledge. Knowledge is direct experience of the Self. Such is abidance at & as, the very source of Happiness. The Self is the source of Happiness. Nothing else is the Source. The Self is Bliss. The experience of the Bliss is determined by Knowledge. No other factors are involved. Seeing this is the Dawn of knowledge. To conceive otherwise is delusion. Objects, circumstances, & events, sensations, & time are not factors determining the desire, the Source, & experience of Happiness.

The Self, which is alone the Source, is always present. Self-knowledge is the sole factor determining Bliss. Therefore the search for Happiness is actually a search for the Self. The Self is the source of Happiness, the place in which Happiness occurs, & the nature of the experience of Happiness. The Self is always present. Self-knowledge is its Revelation & not its creation. The Knowledge of the Self is the Blissful Knowledge of Reality. Bliss is Existence, which is ever existent, & can never cease to exist. Bliss is therefore, always present, & all that is required is to know its existence within oneself. All that is required for permanent, profound Happiness is to know the nature of Existence.



Reality 131

All the *objects* of knowledge change. All that are described as “mine” & Ego, also cannot illumine themselves, nor can they illumine each other. The Self is different from all that are described as “mine”

& Ego. The Self is the unchanging, illuminating Consciousness. This Consciousness is truly one's only Identity. Therefore, there can never truly be Bondage.

One Non-Dual Self alone is. The one Non-Dual Self is the undivided Consciousness. This is the only Knower in all. There are not different kinds of Knowers, such as higher & lower knowers. The Minds of all are pervaded by the one Consciousness within, which is the Self. This is the "I" of all. So there is no one else who knows, or who does not know. The "I" is truly the Absolute, *Brahman*, all-knowing & all-pervading.

This "I" pervades & illumines the Mind. An the Mind pervades & illumines all things ever experienced. Thus this "I" is the illuminator & pervader of all. This Self is the Witness of all *objects* of the Mind. These mental *objects* are subtle thoughts & also all the *objects* conceived as external as well. This includes being the Witness of all other Minds conceived as existing within the Mind. Thus the Self is the Witness of all.

The Mind cannot conceive the Self, yet the Mind has no existence apart from the Self. The Self can neither be accepted, nor rejected by any of the Minds. That which cannot be accepted or rejected by the Mind is *Brahman*. That is truly the "I". *Brahman* & the Self are One.

The Truth regarding the Self is that it is of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss, & there is nothing other than the Self. The Self is 1-w/o-a-2nd, without anything other. In the *Ribhu Gita*, experience is described as composed of 5 parts: Being, Consciousness, Bliss, Name & Form. The same *Gita* says that the first 3 pertain to Reality, & the last 2 pertain to utter Illusion. The Reality is *Being-Consciousness - Bliss*, while that which is Illusion is Name & Form. Illusion signifies something actually nonexistent, something that is not.

What is meant by Name & Form ? Form refers to everything perceived through the Senses. Name refers to all that is Formulated in ideas, anything of a mental character.

To those who are wisely meditating & thus recognizing that the World exists only in the Mind & nowhere else, we often say that the Truth is Formless. This statement pertains to both Name & Form. Everything perceivable & conceivable is not the Self & so such is not the actual Truth.

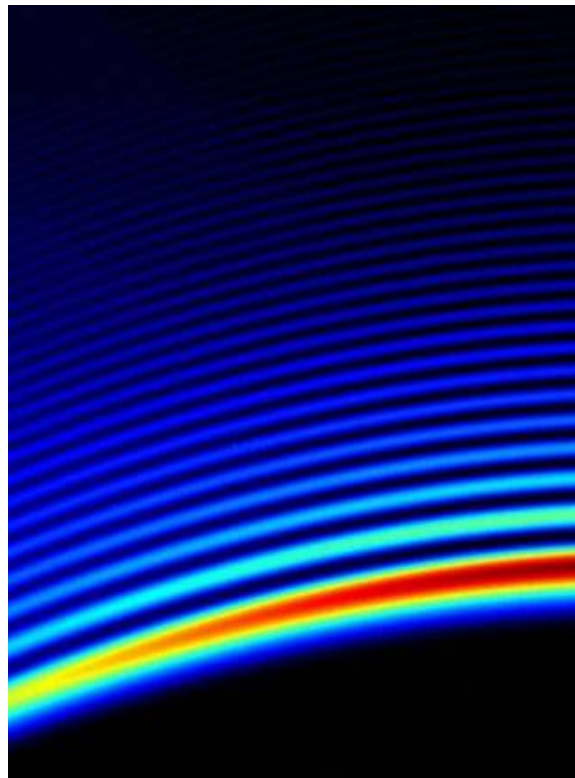
Being-Consciousness-Bliss is said to be Truth. Being is non-objective. It has no Form, is qualityless & attributeless, & *That* which ever is. The Self, *Being* is *Consciousness* but not mere thought-Form & not mere sensation. The Self is Bliss but not a mere mode of Mind or emotion, not something that depends on an outer cause or set of conditions, & not something that happens in Time. The Self is Bliss that is that is simultaneous & identical with *Being*, which the ever-present Consciousness.

In the book, *Who am I ?*, the Maharshi points out this fact regarding the Self. At the commencement of the text, after describing the negation of every kind of mis-identification — starting with the Body, including *Prana* or Life Energy, & proceeding to the Mind & all else — he says, "*The Awareness that remains is of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss.*" That is, it is not individualized, it is not embodied, & it is not of Name & Form. *That Awareness* is the Formless, attributeless, eternal Truth, & that is the real nature of the Self, which is who you are. It is this that you experience if you deeply Inquire within yourself, "*Who am I ?*"

The *Upanishads*. also speak of the Self as *Sat-Chit-Ananda, Being-Consciousness-Bliss*. The same Upanishads also refer to it as *Truth-Knowledge-Infinity* [*Satyam Jnanam Anantam – both comparable to Satyam Shiva Sundarum, the True, the Good, the Beautiful*].

Truth-Knowledge-Infinity. *Truth* is what *is*, & *Truth* is something that *always is*. To find the *Truth*, look to that which is ever existent, which is something without Birth or Death, Creation or Destruction. When you *Inquire* within yourself to know *Truth*, you are looking for that which actually *is*. *Truth*, or *Reality*, is that which *is* & which is *ever-existent* & which must be changelessly so. If it is not ever-existent, it would be true at one time & false at another. And *Truth* cannot be false at any time. What *Truth* is, always is. If it would change in the least degree, it would be a "truth" that forms admixtures with what is false. If though, what you find is *True*, it never mixes with anything else, because of its invariable nature & because there is nothing else for it to mix with, for the *Real* is, & the *unreal* is not. The *Real* will not mix with the *unreal*. If you apply this *Knowledge* to yourself in searching for the actual experiential *Realization* of the *Truth* within you, you will understand what is meant by "1-w/o-a-2nd," "*Non – Duality*," & "*there has never been anything else*." You will understand why the ancients said, "*Brahman alone is*." *Brahman* means vast *Absolute Truth*. You will understand why the ancients said "*All this is only Brahman*," "*There is nothing but Brahman*" & so forth.

Truth-Knowledge-Infinity. The 1st term is *Truth*, & the 2nd is *Knowledge*. It is a basic, spiritual fact, which can be discerned by anyone who is introspective, that *Ignorance* alone is the cause of *Bondage* & its consequent *Suffering*.



Reality 132

What If ?

What if, for the sake of discussion, for the sake of argument, we start from some extreme position, & follow it to some resulting "down-stream" conclusions, just to see where it gets us ? I can't promise that we stick to any given criteria of strict Logic or Proof, but perhaps some "ring" of truth remains after the speculative exercise. The other promise might have to be relinquished, for instance, if the validity of that same Logic or Proof only "existed" at a far lesser "down-stream" level in the chain of speculation. To anchor these abstract ground-rules a bit, let's begin with our Protagonist deeply asleep. A very Wise One that he knows shakes his shoulder, awakens him rapidly, & asks quickly:

Do you exist ?

The former sleeper responds right or later relates the immediate response in him Mind:

Yes, certainly I exist ! I just know that's true, spontaneously & undoubtedly.

The Wise questioner counters with an observation & a 2nd confirming question:

Oh I see, you "know" you exist like that. So can I agree that you "exist" & that you also "know" – at least that much.

Nodding his head in assent, the freshly awakened asks once for clarification & then listens for a while.

Granted what you say, what is the significance ?

Asking the awakened to suspend judgment for bit, much as expressed at our beginning, the Wise One ventures on with is own "What if ?" scenario, with minimal detailed explanation or proof, getting no further argument or interrupting question from the listener. He speculates as follows, or with words to that effect.

That "inner place" in which you felt that certainty of your Existence, & also that certainty of your knowing so, your Consciousness, is actually the same "place". Moreover that "place" is not a *place*, having size or shape, & has no location in Space, or in Time for that matter. The very same "place" where you are certain of your Consciousness *is* actually your Consciousness itself. As also the very same "place" where you are certain of your Existence, it truly *is* your Existence, it is what you are, your Self.

And not only your Self, but the same is my Self, & the Self of everyone & all that exist, have ever existed, or will ever exist. That singular Existence or Being is the literal Truth proclaimed by Parmenides & Shankara, by Huang Po, Meister Eckhart, Ib'n al Arabi, Brahmagma Ma, & Ananda Ma. The point being that no culture, gender, creed, or period of history has unique claim to this recognition, this Knowledge known as the Perennial Philosophy.

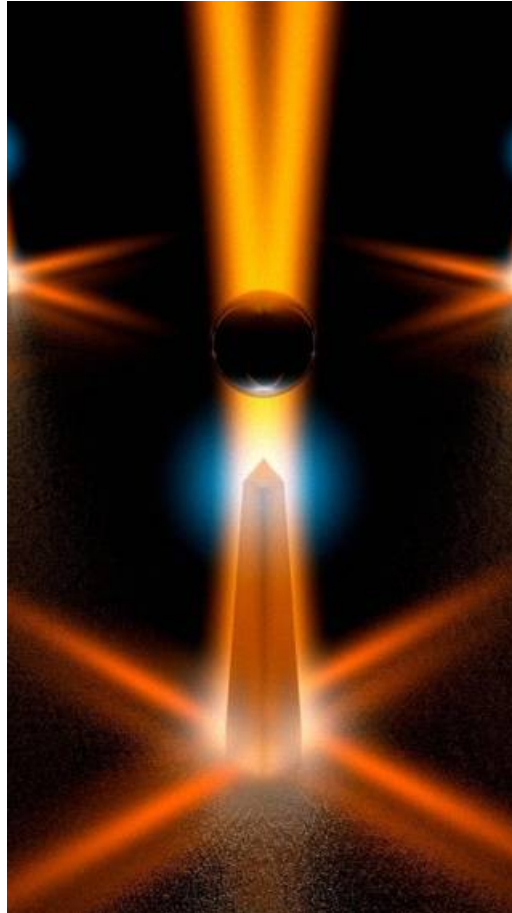
Further observations include the fact that very same not-a-place "place" or Brahman or the Self is also experienced routinely as the Source of Happiness, Love, Bliss, Joy, Peace, Satisfaction, Freedom & the like. These are all one with Consciousness & Being, though Happiness in full is more often the complete "reference value" we all intuit, perfect Happiness, the goal, whether we currently believe it to be attained or not. That Source of Happiness is the same "place" where true Happiness (not mere pleasure or triumph) is actually felt, routinely. Even the sense of its lack could be said to be felt there along with all negative emotions that see so by coloration with conceptual self-delusion.

The Maharshi reveals the nature of Self-Realization, Self-Knowledge, & the direct path that reveals it, the utterly formless path, Self-Inquiry. In practicing Self-Inquiry, striving for Self-Knowledge, & coming to “abide” in the Realization of the Self, it is essential to understand that it is *Self-Knowledge*, *Self-Inquiry*, or *Self-Realization*.

This refers, not to the illusory Individual who might be conceived of as personal, or embodied, or with any number of attributes. Rather it refers to Your *Existence* itself, which is one’s own *Being*.

The Maharshi has said, "*The Inquirer is the answer to Self-Inquiry, & there can be no other answer.*" This is what needs to be kept in Mind. The inquiry is not into some *objective* thing, which would be transient & with form &, therefore, limited. To the contrary, the inquiry is into your Self & is your own Consciousness becoming awake to its own Real Nature. It is waking up out of the Deep Dreamless Sleep, Dream, & Waking states. It is your own *Being*, or essential *Existence*, waking up to itself, as it is, without superimposition, without misidentification. This is the Knowledge. The inquiry serves the purpose of destroying whatever misidentification there might be & shows Illusion as Illusion, which means as that which is not. Self-Inquiry is the Knowledge that is direct experience. Direct experience means without any intermediary. It is not experience that comes from the “outside”. Indeed, for one who is inquiring, there comes the understanding that nothing comes from some “outside”. The outside does not exist as such. The experience of knowing one’s Self does not come through the Senses or the thinking process. Rather, it is your own *Existence* knowing itself, by itself, free of form, free of any concept, & free of any thought.

Non-Dual experience is aligned with Self-Knowledge, & may be felt by the aspirant as greater Freedom, greater Happiness, greater Peace. Such do not come *to you*. Indeed, it is always already there, but Illusion or Ignorance needs to be destroyed in order that the real Knowledge, the Reality, itself, shines. Similarly, the state of Self-Realization does not *come to* anyone. In Self-Realization, there is just the Self, & no Individual.



Reality 133

Observing Life & Death, those who desire to be free of Death should seek the immortality of the Self, using that same desire be free of Death to find Liberation. Find clarity regarding the desire to endure, & thus turn this innate desire into the desire for Self-Realization. This Realization alone can fulfill that innate desire. Those who perceive mortality, feel the urge to find something that does not die. They recognize that everything in the World is perishable. Therefore what they seek must be found within in a way that transcends what is physical. They see that it is futile to be attached to that which is only going to pass away sooner or later, so seek spirituality for immortality. This immortality is to be found in the Self. Abidance as the Self is Knowledge of the Self. An Inquiry into the knowledge of Immortality reveals that Bliss & Immortality are the same & that both are realizable by Knowledge.

As a result of comprehending the Non-Dual Teaching, one is liberated from the illusory connection to the Body & what is mortal. The fusion of the desire for Happiness & the desire to exist results in one being endowed with a singular focus upon Self-Realization. This enables one to practice the Inquiry to know the Self with the power of undistracted meditation. Fullness & Perfection, the unceasing Bliss, reside in That which neither rises nor sets, which neither begins nor ceases. The experience of Happiness is connected with the desire for Eternity. No one desires a Happiness that will cease. Rather, the desire is for Happiness that will not cease & is forever. The desire for Immortality is as strong as the desire for Happiness. The 2 are inextricably woven together. Just as no one wishes to be unhappy, so no one wishes to cease to exist, though one may wish objective appearances, such as the Senses, the Body,

& the Thoughts to cease. All with to continue forever. This is an intuition of the true nature of Existence.

The desire to exist cannot be fulfilled externally in bodily forms. The time state of Being, when it is unrealized & delusion is present, manifests as the desire for this or that to last. Realized, the Self itself is the un-born & the un-dying. The Self abides in the state of imperturbable Peace, completely detached & non-dependent on anything else. The Self is transcendent of the entire Universe for all Time. The desire to endure springs from the deepest & is fulfilled by realizing the deepest, which is the eternal Existence of the Self. Immortality is complete Happiness, for the essence of both is the same, & only that which is unending is complete. The transitory is not complete, & that which is Suffering is not Eternal. The Realization of the Self is blissful Immortality. It is Abidance in & as That which has no beginning or end. The desire for Happiness & Immortality are the same. They come from the same intuition of Truth of the Self. Only Abidance as the Self which is the Reality, fulfills both.

The Self is That which has no beginning or end & is That which is Real or truly existent. The Self is changeless. Whatever has a beginning or a change & an end is unreal. The “being unreal” may be understood as being utterly non-existent, or as the Existent entirely mis-perceived. To experience blissful Immortality, one must realize the Existence of the Self as it really is; one must abide as the beginningless & endless, as the changeless. The Knowledge of the Self is the Knowledge of the Eternal, the unchanging, & the completely blissful. It is the Knowledge of Reality. This is the only true Perception To see anything else is to see the non-existent. That is Ignorance.

Ignorance is composed of assumptions & super-impositions. It is the non-perception of Reality & the mis-perception of Reality. That displays itself as the non-seeing of Real, Non-Dual Being & the hallucination of Duality or Multiplicity. The knowing of anything, be it gross (*physical*) or subtle (*mental*, etc.), without the Knowledge of the Self, is simply diversified Ignorance, or diversified Illusion. In the Knowledge of Reality of the Self, there remains neither Multiplicity nor Duality, nor anything else. One Formless Existence is with no differentiation whatsoever. One Formless Existence appears as if it were all this multiplicity. All the multiplicity is only the one Formless Existence imagined as such.

To realize the Truth, for the Truth to be Self-revealed, one should abandon Ignorance, multiplicity, the transitory, & the illusion of form, & abide as the Formless, which is Real, Non-Dual, & ever-existent. This Abidance is Knowledge. The destruction of Illusion means the destruction of Ignorance regarding the Self or the destruction of misidentification. Such is the destruction of Suffering & the end of Death. This is blissful Immortality. It is simply the vanquishing of Ignorance. By the Truth being revealed within, mis-identifications, or super-impositions are destroyed. By the destruction of misidentifications, or superimpositions, Truth is revealed within.



Reality 134

Difference, & change belong to the Senses & the Mind. The Self is undivided & without modifications. Whatever is subject to change is limited. The Self is limitless. Knowledge through the Senses & the Mind changes & ceases. Real Knowledge of the Self is ceaseless & never other than Being itself. This Knowledge is as limitless & invariable as Being itself. Just as all other thoughts are merely objective Perceptions, so is the Ego, which is not the Self & not a possession or attribute of the Self. One should discriminate what is the Body, the Senses, the Mind, or "I" notion, or the aggregate of such, & inquire, "Who am I?".

One should give up the Identity that appears in the Waking State of Mind & also the belief of reality in the Waking State itself. Likewise, one should not identify with what is of the Dream State, in which the Mind functions in a similar objective fashion. One must know himself as beyond that which is of Deep Sleep, which is a state of Causal Merger. The Self is the Witness of all states, is pure Consciousness, & is not an object of knowledge. It is the unknown knower. Though Consciousness cannot be known as an object, it, being formless & without duality, Consciousness can never be made distant from oneself. Therefore, the Self, of the nature of Consciousness, is always known as one's Own Nature. Consciousness is self-effulgent & does not require any other knowledge to know itself other than that which is its Own Nature, just as a light does not need another light in order to be seen, but is seen because of its own light.

The Self is the only knower, & nothing else is so. It never *comes into* existence, for it eternally exists, & is without cause & effect. The Self & Self-Knowledge are not effects of anything. Just as the

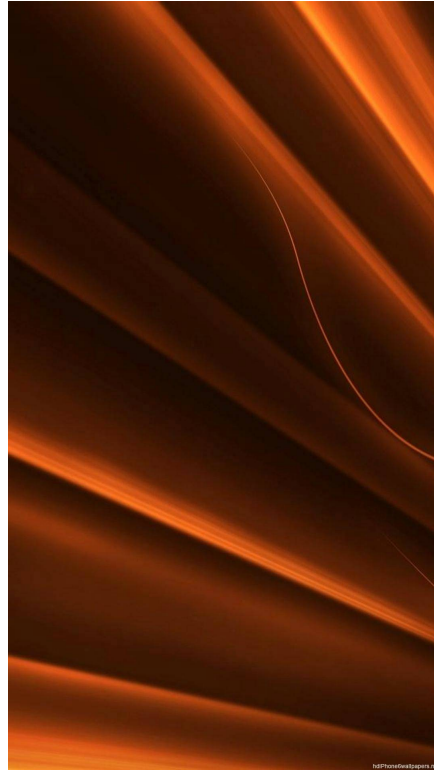
manifested & the un-manifested are 2 states superimposed upon the Self so, too, are Bondage & Liberation. As there is no day or night for the Sun itself so there is neither Knowledge nor Ignorance for the Self. Realizing the Self as having no connection with anything ever, one is himself the Truth of the Unborn, the Truth of *No-creation*, & is never born again & is never in Illusion again.

If one is immersed in *Samsara*, the repetitive cycle of Illusion, Births & Deaths, filled with Suffering, then the way to liberate himself is by Knowledge. Liberation, which is the goal of spiritual practice, is one's own if, inquiring to know the Self, he discards all notions of "me" & "mine," attains complete certitude in the Space-like nature of Reality, & abides devoid of physical & mental forms & the assumption of an Ego-entity.

If the Self would change states, such as states of Ignorance & Knowledge, of Bondage & Liberation, it would be destructible, & Liberation, itself, would be artificial or unreal. Liberation is not a change of state from one into another. It is not reasonable to imagine a separation & union in relation to the Self, for both would be transitory. The transient cannot be attributed to the Eternal, just as the unreal cannot be attributed to the Real, or the dual to the Non-Dual. As there truly can be neither union nor separation, Liberation cannot consist of the Individual entering into Brahman or Brahman coming to the Individual.

The true nature of the Self is never destroyed, is changeless, is uncaused, & cannot be obtained or lost. The new appearance or coming into being of any state would be the effect of a precedent cause &, thus, changeful, transitory, & not self-existent; such cannot be permanent Liberation. Self-Knowledge alone is Liberation. Knowing the Self to be oneself is the greatest attainment. To wrongly assume the non-Self to be the Self is ignorance. The removal of the superimposed mis-conceptions, of what the Self is alone, constitutes the path to Liberation. No other view is reasonable, as such always involves some dualism, some belief in an existent Individual experiencer & a self-existent objective thing, & the conception that the Reality becomes other than what it is & the unreal actually comes to be.

Liberation cannot be a change of condition, because such involves mutability & thus destructibility, parts or divisions, & a change in nature. Any belief that superimposition occurs on nonexistence, that Illusion can actually create itself or that there is no Absolute Self should be abandoned because the existence of Being, itself, is irrefutable, & it is not reasonable that something could come from nothing. Superimposition occurs on some real thing, & there is the one who knows this Ignorance. It is Ignorance of what, & for who is it ? If one so inquires, one finds that Being *is*, Consciousness *is*.



Reality 135

The supposedly knowing Mind & the Universe known are both imagined. Existence-Knowledge, which is Being-Consciousness, alone is Real. It exists without anything else. It alone is both the Knower & the known, but the forms of such are imagined. Difference, which manifests only in the Mind of the Waking & Dream States, is unreal. Non-Dual Consciousness alone exists.

The ancient Sages gave their spiritual instruction in Silence & with the Teachings revealing how “That you are (*Tat tvam asi*).” Inquiry into this instruction removes all the ideas of what is not the Self from the Self, like the proverbial negation of the *Snake* from the *Rope*. This negation is never of a Reality, but of false assumptions, or super-imposition. If real things were negated, Liberation would be transitory or not at all, for how would it be possible for something truly existent to go out of existence or for something to change its nature ? The inquiry & negation eliminate Ignorance, Illusion, only. All that is objective, as well as the Ego, are negated by the Inquiry summed up as “*not this, not this*” revealing Being, which is Consciousness, the one Self.

The Ego is ignorantly assumed to be the Self &, thus, the knower. The conceptions of the Mind determine if one is endowed with wrong knowledge, doubtful knowledge, or true Knowledge. With mis-identification, there is wrong knowledge. That is, what is regarded as Knowledge is actually Ignorance.

Thus, there is self-caused delusion about Happiness, Identity, & Reality. With spiritual practice, there is doubtful knowledge. That is, there is actual knowledge of Happiness, Identity, & Reality, but such is not steady. It is either a conviction, but without direct experience, or it is a conviction fused with experience, but not steady because of the need to destroy the remaining tendency to misidentify. True Knowledge is that state in which Knowledge is invariable & in which knowing & Being are one & the same. At all times, the same Consciousness is the only Knower, but it appears as an Ego, a dissolving Ego, or as purely Ego-less, just as a clear *crystal* appears as if endowed with different colors or as

transparent according to the proximity of different colored things or the absence of them. In Truth, all such states & their content are known by the Self, have their apparent existence by the Self, which is free from them & depends on no thought whatsoever to know itself, & "all such states" do not exist apart from the Self, though the Self itself can never be other than the Knowledge, Being, itself.

Regarding the great aphorism, "*Thou art That (Tatvamasi)*" wise Sages declare that the primary meaning of *That* is the Absolute, Brahman, & the primary meaning of *Thou* is the Knower, or "I". The *essential* meaning of *That* is the true Self. The *essential* meaning of *Thou* is only pure Being, pure Consciousness. The meaning of both is thus the same, & this is what "*Art*" expresses. "*Art*" is an expression of complete Identity. "*Art*" is realized by the relinquishment of other ideas regarding *That* &, most importantly, by Self-Inquiry into *Thou*. The deeper the inquiry into *Thou*, the more *That* is known as it is, for *Thou Art That*. No repetition of the idea, "*I am That*" "*I am the Self*," or "*I am Brahman*" is intended, for such implies difference between the instructed & the instruction, between the Meditator, the meditation, & the meditated upon, between the one desiring Liberation & the Liberation itself, between the *self* who would know & that *Self* to be known, & between the realizer & the realized. The Non-Dual Teaching of Identity with the Absolute Self, *Brahman*, is to be practiced by Self-Inquiry, full of clear Discrimination, that frees one of the false notion of *Doer-ship*, of being a sensing entity, of being an experiencer, of being a thinker, & such, & that Self-Inquiry discerns fully that the one Self is not the Body, Mind, or Ego, or anything connected with these. Then, one knows one's own true Self to truly be *Brahman*.

The Knowledge of the Self becomes possible only when the Ego vanishes. What remains is the Self-evident, the Self-Knowable, the eternally existing, the forever liberated that has never been bound. The Freedom & Happiness of this Realization have no cause or reason. They are self-existing, as Being itself is. Only unhappiness & Bondage seem to have reasons, which, with Self-Inquiry, are found to be merely Ignorance.

When the Knowledge that one is the Self, *Brahman*, is not veiled by the false notions that Reality is something other than the Non-Dual Self, that oneself is other than the Formless, motionless, immutable Self, that Happiness is other than the blissful Self, when not so veiled, the Knowledge is firm. Then, the mis-identification of the Self with the Body or any other form becomes impossible.



Reality 136

The direct path of Knowledge is that in which one discriminates as described here, renounces the actions of the Body & Mind, frees himself from the ideas of being a *Performer*, experiencer, thinker, etc., abides free of outer sensing & inner conceiving activities, & thus knows the Self to be *That*. The practice of the Teaching of "*Thou art That*" is the Self-Inquiry: "*Who am I ?*" When the Knowledge of the Self which is the Absolute, is not contradicted by the false notions that one lacks Bliss & has desires, that one is not Consciousness & *does* [is the Performer of Action], & that one is not Being but is a bound entity, without such contradictions, the Knowledge is firm.

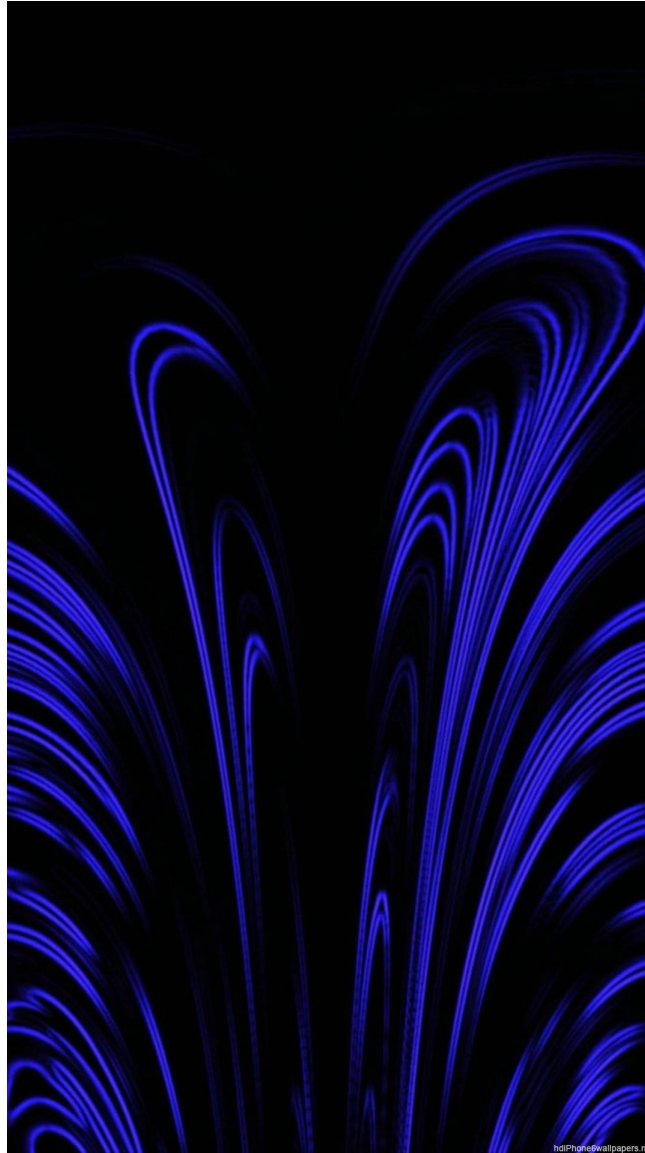
Though the Body is not the Self, the Self is not the *Performer* of Action, & Action is unrelated to Self-Knowledge & can in no way bring about the Liberation that this Knowledge alone yields, the holy sage who thus knows will always be manifesting what is True, Good, & Beautiful [*"acting" as if in contradiction, but always rightly, if the real of appearance*]. With Love for all beings, knowing all to be himself, endowed with equanimity & imperturbable peace, with no self-interest, he is ever engaged in the highest good, whether he appears active or still. His honesty derives from Truth itself, his Love from

the indivisible Nature of Being, his Peace from the immovable Absolute, & his kindness & care from the perfect Fullness. How would it be possible for one who knows about Liberation & the Non-Dual Teaching of Identity with the divine Absolute Self to engage in conduct that would be otherwise ?

Nonetheless, it is never possible to determine the state of a realized Sage from the outer appearances of the body with which he has no identity whatsoever. The Sage has gone beyond the Illusions of Life & death, never to return to that which never really was. He [or she] is serene in & as the Absolute, & abides as the Eternal. Whatever is done, he does nothing. Whatever is said, he remains Silent. Whatever is thought, he remains unmodified. For he has known himself, & he himself is what he knows. *You Are That*. Realize the Truth of this by Self-Inquiry.

Supreme Knowledge, Consciousness, is Brahman [prajnanam brahma]. Attain Liberation by Knowledge & realize that true Knowledge is the Eternal, Supreme Consciousness itself. *This Self is Brahman [ayam atma brahma].* Inquire "Who am I ?" & realize pure Being as the *One-without-a-2nd* [Advaita]. "I am Brahman." Abide in the natural state of the real Self, in the state of Identity with no other "I".

Abide as *That*, which, when known, leaves no other thing to be known. Abide as *That*, the Happiness of which leaves nothing else to be desired. Abide as *That*, which, when realized, leaves no other Reality but itself. Abide as that which is the Self which alone exists Eternally, for it is *That* which alone is.



Reality 137

There is One, which dwells in which is all, in which ugly transcends all. That One is the Real Self, the abiding Truth, the Non-Dual Reality.

Ramana Maharshi has said that when even the ancient, primordial Sage, *Dakshinamurti* could convey the truth only by Silence, who else can do so by words ? Nevertheless we express a Teaching pointing to Truth, pointing to the way to realize the Truth, & then we go within & know it firsthand in a way that is beyond words also beyond thought – beyond an individual Knower & an object Known.

Reality as it is, is pure existence. Reality is not existence is merely a thing, nor as many things, nor even as all things put together, but just pure Existence without the super-imposed notion of anything objective, without Form, free of the limitations of Form, without division, & having no parts, there being nothing else to divide it.

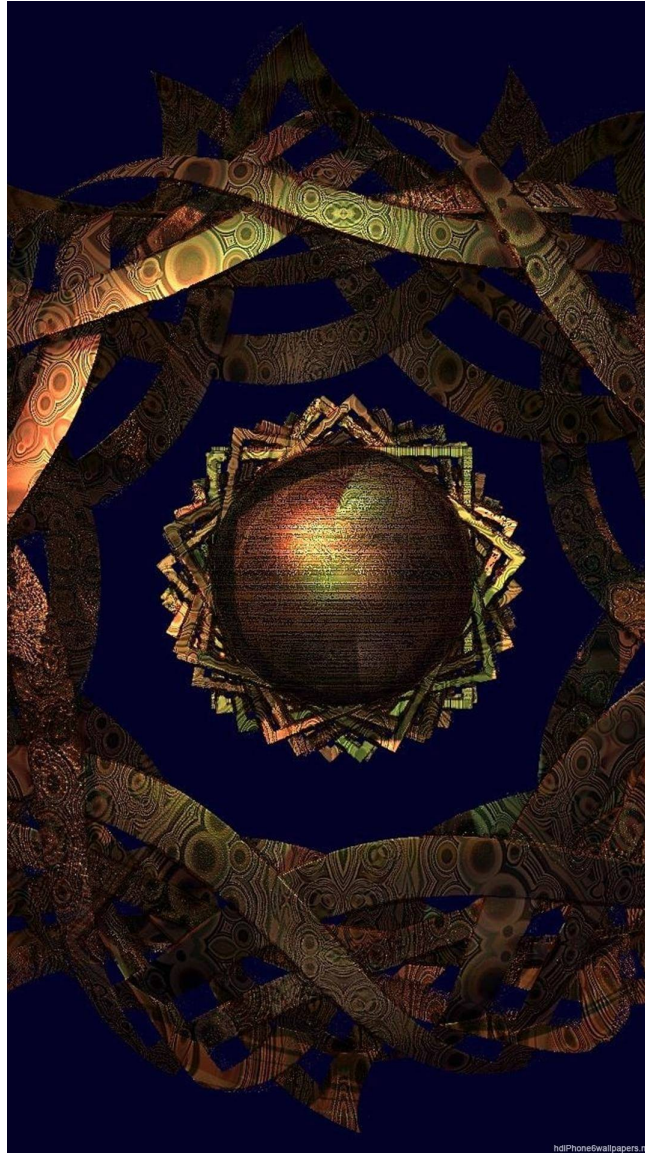
Reality may also be said to be pure Consciousness without limitation, without Individuality, Impersonal, without a subject & object, & free of all kinds of division. Reality is also bliss, which is why, when a person realizes the Truth, or finds Reality, that person has a Happiness which endures, which does not depend on any Cause, which is without conditions, & which is without end.

But yet how is one to find Reality when one is himself the Reality? The attempt to find Reality as if it were an object is somewhat like a dog or cat chasing round & round after its own tail. The Reality is this homogeneous Existence, this illimitable Consciousness, yet if this is not your own experience, why is that so ?

To tell the truth, there is no valid reason why that is so. Because there is no valid reason, we say that: "it is because of Ignorance." The nature of Ignorance is Illusion which is something unreal. While it is not possible for the unreal, which is never really come to be, to veil or diminish the Reality, which always is, Yet as seeker tries to realize Truth, & there seems to be something that hides the Truth.

What seems to hide the Truth ? What seems to make the division ? What seem to give rise to a split, where in truth there is only Non-Dual Being ? It is whatever we regard as "this" (*idam*). By "this" is meant anything *objective*. Primarily this appears as what we take to be things & what we take to be thought (physical & *subtle*).

For someone who is accustomed to meditating in a profound manner & who realizes the World to be within the Mind, the things in the thoughts will be regarded as of the same substance. A person seems to be separated from that Absolute Reality, the Supreme Self, the True Nature of the Self is *Brahman*, or God & there can be no separation. When one seems to be separate from the Absolute by "this" – by the objective definitions, which pertain to "things & thoughts".



Reality 138

If you want to know Pure Existence as it is, we have to, as Ramana Maharshi says, "give up the *objective* outlook." Until we give up that *outlook*, there is no use wrangling in Mind, let alone arguing with one another, as to what is Real, what is unreal, what is half Real & unreal, what is both Real & unreal, what is neither Real nor unreal, for any other logical combination one can manage to imagine. It serves little purpose, & so in Non-Dual texts & in the writings of *Ramana Maharshi*, those kinds of concepts are discarded. You give up the *objective* outlook, lose the sense of Ego, & then you find Reality as it is.

What does it mean to "give up the *objective* outlook" ? What one experiences as Reality is determined by what one uses to determine that Reality. What one considers to be Real depends entirely upon the *instrument* one uses to determine what is Real. That instrument is very much woven together with where one takes one "stand", with what one identifies. For example, if one mis-identifies with the physical form, a Body, in most circumstances such a person would use the Senses as the determination

of Reality. He will see or recognize only that which is perceived by the Senses. He will regard what is not Sense-perceived as being not there. or as unreal. Or else if one thinks that it may be real, it is "beyond his experience."

However if his stand would change so that he no longer identifies merely as a physical Body, correspondingly he would no longer take the Senses as being the only determinants of Reality, or determinants of any sort at all. Then what would be the real for him?

If he considers all that comes through one Senses is not Reality, or is only a partial perception of Reality, where the mis-perception of Reality, such considerably expands his spiritual horizons. Of course this makes it much more possible for one to come to the Realization of the Absolute Truth, because Formless Existence, perpetual Consciousness is not something that will come to the Senses. It is realized by a different kind of Knowledge.

Consider what is taken to be real and how one determines what is Real. In an external sense, one may seem to gather facts about things, but is this Real? Or do we have a series of sense perceptions, of which are true & some of which are false ?

Everyone is had the experience of seeing an optical illusion & so on, & the vast majority of information merely comes by word-of-mouth. Somebody else tells us, or we read something, & we construct the view accordingly. We construct a view of the World regarded as Real based primarily on our own ideas or opinions, & opinions of others, which when repeated often enough are considered to be Real.

How much of what we know about the World, about others, & so on, is merely ideas And opinions created out of one's own thinking & the words & thoughts of others ? How much of it is actual experience ? This is looking at it in the most relative, basic level. How much of it is just thought of in the Mind & survives as an idea. This is primarily due to one not undergoing actual experience of any of those things. Such experience might prove one's idea to be completely different from that experience.

Applying this point in a deeper way, to the Mind & Real Existence. How much of what we consider to be Real is merely an idea, a thought, perhaps an often-repeated thought ? Conversely, how much is actual experience of pure Existence undefined by any thought ?



Reality 139

Whatever we regard as our Identity determines what we're using to determine Reality & consequently our view of what is True. How we to see Reality truly as it is, & not as it is imagined to be ? And why should we do so ? As countless ancient Sages have testified to, & is taught by Ramana Maharshi, if we know Reality as it is, ours is an unutterable Peace & Bliss prolonged without any termination whatsoever. This is like Awakening from a long Dream. If you do not know Reality as it is, there will be Bondage & its consequent Suffering.

So how are we to know Reality? In the Teachings of Ramana Maharshi, & elsewhere in the Advaita Vedanta teachings, you can see the *key*. The *key* is "find out the Self." If you know the Self, you know Reality.

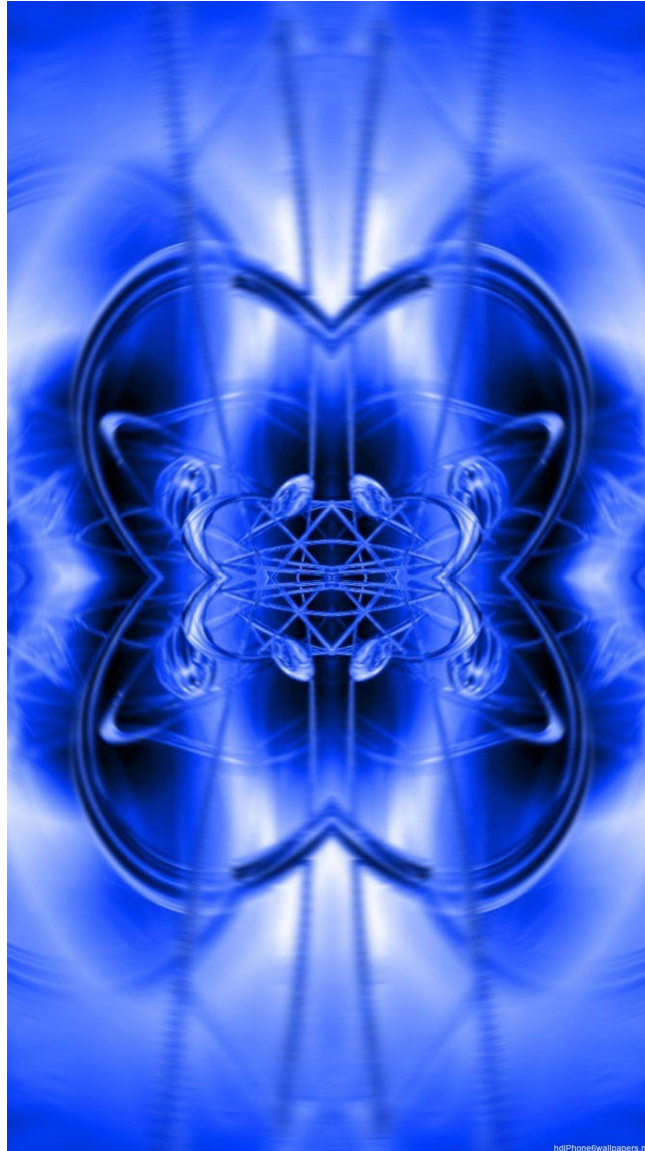
If you know the Self, what you will be using to determine Reality will be of the nature of Reality itself. You will see the Reality at as it is – not as is imagined to be, but *as it is*. If you know Reality as it is, as

all the Sages declare, there is nothing else to know. There is just oneself, & no longer "I & this" – ("*aham & idam*").

What is the method of practical application ? It is a study deep, penetrating Self-Inquiry to find out who you are. The Self-Inquiry itself, becomes a means of determining Reality. Inquire to find out who you are, & realize within yourself the fact that you are not a Body, you are not the Mind, & you are not an Ego, or separate Individuality. An Individual is one who has a Body, who has a Mind, becomes entangled with a Body & a Mind, & who mistakes a Body & a Mind to be the Self. You are not that Ego.

Standing free of the "I am the Body" idea, what is the actual experience of Reality ? This is what we must know by our own inner Meditation. Stand beyond the Mind, that is beyond thought, & what is found to be Reality. What is the direct experience of Reality when you are not trying to know it through thought ? You need not be concerned whether you have thoughts or do not have thoughts. What is Reality, when it is not interpreted through thought ?

What is Reality were not interpreted through the Senses ? What is Reality where not interpreted to the false sense of Individuality, "I" ? If there is I ("*aham*"), Reality will be thought to be this ("*idam*"), as something *objective*. The instruction is: "give up the *objective* outlook." For one who was never considered such, "this" will be the world. If one is a Meditator who has considered things more deeply, "this" will be the content of the Mind. If one is deeply inquiring, even I is only of this. It is still only a "this".



Reality 140

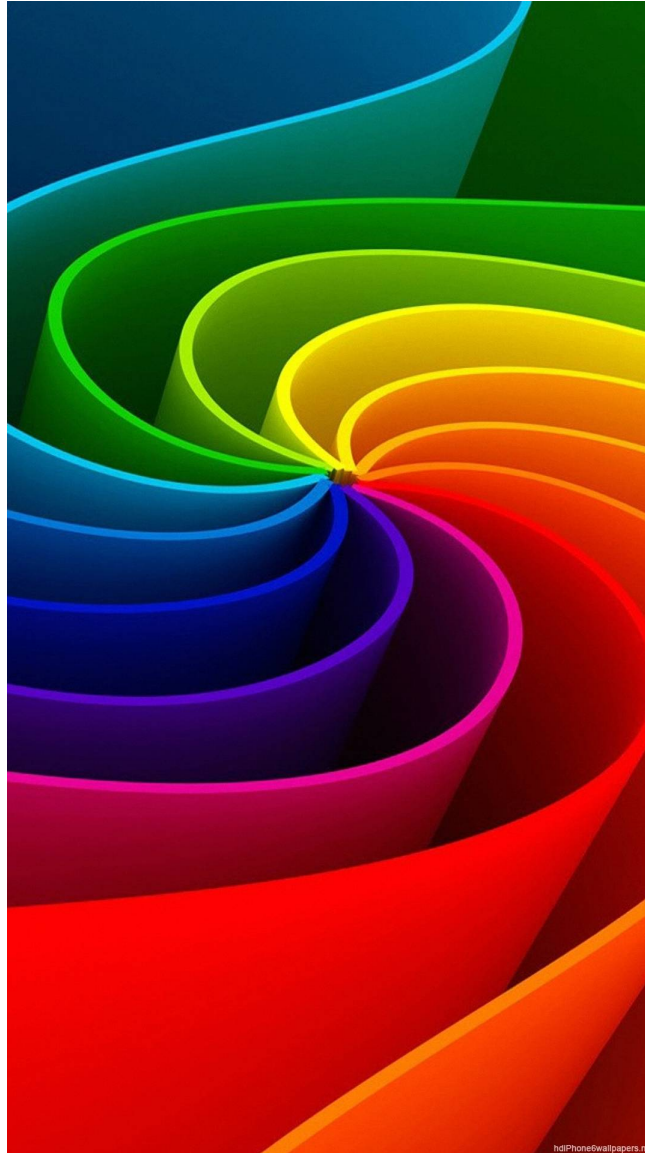
What is the Truth in which there is neither "I" nor this" – ("*aham*" nor "*idam*"). Only deep Self-Inquiry into "who" you are is going to reveal the Truth. What remains when you make such Self-Inquiry ? What remains is just Pure Existence, reposing in itself, just as pure Consciousness knowing itself, but not as some idea or as something apart from you. If you do not inquire, "I" – "*aham*" will be taken for granted with whatever Form is attributed to it can't. Consequently, there will be "this" – "*idam*". And when you hear about the Truth, you will treat Reality or the Truth itself as a "this" – "*idam*", & set about seeking it as if it were an *objective* thing. The seeking itself is wise. The "*objective* thing" part is what has to be removed.

So inquire & discern that which you are in that which is merely an *objective* definition. Objective *definition* is falsehood, Illusion, or Ignorance. Set aside *objective* definition in the attempt to know who you are. Thus you will find that your True Nature, the Real Self, has no Form, gives rise to no Form, & is not entangled in any Form – be it a mental form, a physical form, or any other kind of form.. Self-

Inquire. Know yourself & you will see in truth that it has no limitation. If you want to know the true definition of the Self, the definition of one's own True Self, & *Sri Shankara* taught, you must remove as a definition for the Self everything that is objective & see what remains. In the State that remains, *Ramana Maharshi* says: "Being is knowing."

The question may arise: "How do I do so that I can know ?" It is not an activity. You should approach it with full effort, full *intensity*, but not as an activity, as if you would do something to obtain an *object*. Being as it is as it is, so negate *objective* definition & mis-identifications. Negate those by the process of Self-Inquiry, by process of gaining clarity regarding what your Identity is, & what it is not. This is the Path of Self-Knowledge – you, yourself, knowing your Self by the power of your own Self.

If you proceed in this manner, you realize reality. *Ramana Maharshi* has said that Realization is spoken of just to wean people out of the "unrealized" state. Actually the Self is always Real & always in its own State, & so it is always realized. *Ramana Maharshi* did not say this to try to goad people into inventing new terminology, as if they would then think it is always realized, but now they need to attain it, become it, place themselves in it, bring it here, or some other such thing. The purpose of his statement is to indicate that Reality always is as it is. So if you are treading the Supreme Path of Self-Knowledge, you are looking for *That* which always is.



Reality 141

You are looking for the Existence that is unchanging & which is always who you are, & not something *objective* or new to be added to you. This involves the stripping away of Delusion to see what has been there the entire time. Realization is not an *acquisition*, though it might initially be conceived as such in spiritual practice. Realization is a realizing, or finding out, what has been there the entire time, but only was unknown due to Ignorance.

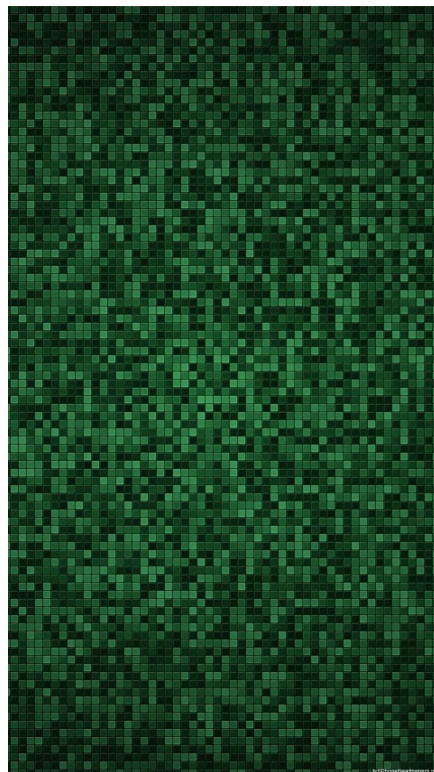
The Self is always in its own State, as it is. The Self will never changes True Nature. In *Advaita Vedanta*, whatever seems to change its nature is said to be unreal. Whatever is Real must always be Real. That which is always Real is your Self. Look for *That* in you which is not an accident, not a new occurrence, not an event, not an activity, but which is your actual existence. Look for *That* in you which is not produced by thought, which is not a collection of thoughts, which is not a *mode* of Mind, not even a State of Mind, but is that which is Existence itself, Consciousness itself.

The Self is always in its own State,. In this way you come to know Reality as it is. Who comes to know Reality? Reality alone has the power to know itself, for the Ego is unreal. The unreal does not exist. If you want to know Reality as it is, know yourself & you yourself are the Reality that is realized.

Although Concentration itself is not a prime Teaching given by Ramana Maharshi, it is important. For if you would be listening to Instruction, or if you are meditating, it is implicit that you concentrate on it. If you sit in Meditation, but spend your time *thinking* about this & that, such is not Meditation. You may say that you "meditating" on this & that, but you are not getting around to any Self-Knowledge. So you need to put your Mind in that direction. If you commence a Meditation, be very cognizant of why you are meditating.

Contemplate your purpose. If you are aware of the preciousness & rarity of the opportunity, although you have had seemingly many opportunities to meditate, meditate on the transients of things. This opportunity could disappear at any moment, and so you best be very focused. No one can say what will happen tomorrow. All these bodies are transient. You do not know what the situation will be. If you're cognizant of this, you seize the opportunity when you have it. When you have that attitude, you tend to be more concentrated & more focused.

Also, if you are aware the fact that you can have profound spiritual experience & if you are aware of the fact that you can realize, you will tend to be more concentrated. If you consider how much wondering mental wondering you have done & all the "good" it has done for you – how many hours, days, weeks, & years are spent with a wandering mind you should ask: "Must we go on like this ?"



Reality 142

During Meditation, direct your Mind in an intelligent fashion. The person who is caught up in day-dreaming, to the extent that there is no noticing that there is day-dreaming, is not about to stop day-dreaming. When a person realizes that he has been day-dreaming at that moment, there is the opportunity to meditate more deeply. [*In truth the entire perceiving & conceiving Waking State is a more solid, consistent, longer duration "day-dreaming".*]

Similarly when one recognizes Ignorance as Ignorance, he can step beyond it. When one sees Illusion as Illusion, he can realize the Truth beyond it. When one sees that this is Suffering & that one need not be suffering, he can proceed towards Bliss. When you see that this is agitation, & that there is a State of Peace, & that you should proceed in the direction of Peace, you can do so. This is the beginning of spiritual Discrimination.

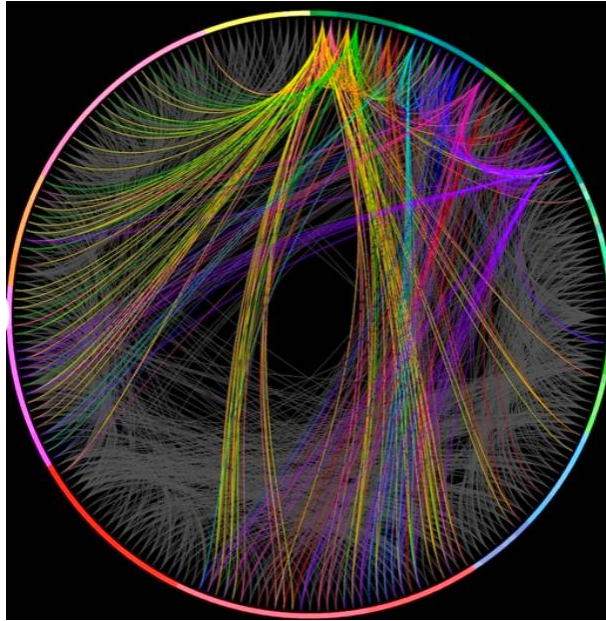
The Senses do not perceive or know thought. Thought is something far *subtler* than sensory Perception. We see forms & colors. We hear sounds. We touch sensations. We smell fragrances & odors. We taste various flavors. You do not however smell flavors, touch visual appearances, or hear thoughts. You do not have sensory perception of thought.

You have thoughts about your sensory perceptions. With Self-Inquiry, we see that thoughts about Perceptions & that Perceptions do not see his thought. Yet thought seizes Perceptions, & Perceptions are nothing but thought. Perceptions are kind of thought, a mode of the mind, only seeming more solid than most.

All perceptions are in the mind, just as in a dream. We seem to have Dream thoughts in a Dream, & we also seem to have Dream Perceptions, but really they are all Dream thoughts. It just seems as if some are inside the Mind of the Dream character, & some are outside the Mind of Dream character. But they are all Dream thoughts.

It is all very much like the way it is in the Waking State. Both in both it is just a play of one's mind. Certainly, that play of the Mind & its subsidence are not seen by the Senses. Something else sees all that. What sees it all is the Witness.

The Witness is not something you do, but rather is something which shines or knows continuously. The Witness is called "Light" but it is not a light that you would physically see. Just as light, such as sunlight or lamplight, enables you to see anything, in the same way, the Witness enables you to have the experience of any kind of thought, including those thoughts that are called Sense Perceptions. With Self-Inquiry as to who is this Witness & what is its nature, you see pure Consciousness is seeing, is knowing. Know Consciousness as it is.



Reality 143

In Meditation we do not enter state in which we are unaware. Rather, it is a State whose nature is Transcendent Consciousness. This State is not one where we are unaware of the World. We are aware that there is no World. It is not that we are unaware the Senses. We are aware that there are no Senses. It is not that we are unaware of thought. Where where the thought has no real existence.

Whatever is known by you is objective to you. Who is that you? You can apply this to all the senses. For it is not the Senses. There is an *Upanishadic* dialogue quoted by *Sri Shankari & Ramana Maharshi*: "What is the Light for you ?" It starts with the outermost Perception, proceed to the Eyes, to the Mind, to the "I", and to the realization that one's Real Nature is Consciousness.

Obviously, when we meditate, we do not intend to fall asleep. But due to infirmity & illness, we sometimes do not get our stay regarding this. When the *prana*, or Life-Energy seems weakened by disease illness, age etc. is more likely that there might be sleep. When you re-collect yourself & wake up from Sleep, resume Meditation. Make sure that the Meditation, though aiming at Space-like truth, has sufficient focus to keep the Mind activity inward. You do not want to just enter a Blank State. A Blank State will lend itself to sleep much more than an actual Self-Inquiry. When you wake up from Sleep, use the Waking State opportunity that then appears to meditate profoundly on what it is that does not engage in, or does not get lost in, any of the 3 States [*Waking, Dream, & Deep Dreamless Sleep*]. You will want to stand dis-identified from all the "experiencers" of those 3 States. Concentration that is deliberate about the purpose & opportunity we have in Meditation can sometimes stave off sleep, even if there is infirmity.

Being very keenly aware of why you are meditating & the treasure of the opportunity to meditate, these can have a stimulating effect. Such will tend to keep Sleep away, even if you are suffering illness & infirmity that would incline your Body toward Sleep. Then, if Sleep does happen, when you come awoken, then deeply meditate upon that which neither went into Sleep nor comes out of Sleep & which is not in the State of Mind [*Waking, Dream, & Deep Dreamless Sleep*].

One cannot really say that Deep Dreamless Sleep is the most desirable. It is just that Deep Dreamless Sleep has the least amount of *objective* definition, or that "*this*" element. Consequently you've feel a greater sense of Peace in Deep Dreamless Sleep. Your thoughts & Perceptions are absent, and consequently, the mis-identifications & attachments are not active. They are said to be in a Causal form. The Deep Sleep State is thus called the Causal State. The Deep Sleep State is not the desirable State.

Advaita Vedanta says that you should aim for the 4th State (*turiya*), & not Waking, not Dream, & not Deep Dreamless Sleep.



Reality 144

When we realize what *Advaita Vedanta* calls that 4th State (*turiya*), it is the state of pure consciousness as it is. Area is thus seen to be the only State that really is. So *turiya* is not really a 4th State, it is beyond the idea of a "4th", to really a *turiyatita* (beyond the 4th State).

If it seems as if one is going through Waking, Dream, & Deep Dreamless Sleep, aim for the 4th State (*turiya*). How is one to so aim at a 4th state? Deeply meditate upon *That* which passes through all 3 States unaffected. *That* cannot be the Body. *That* cannot be the *prana* or Life-Energy. *That* cannot be the thoughts, or Mind of the Dreamer, Waking one, etc. Something is going through all those 3 States unaffected, unattached to the content of any of those 3 States & the experience of any of those 3 States.

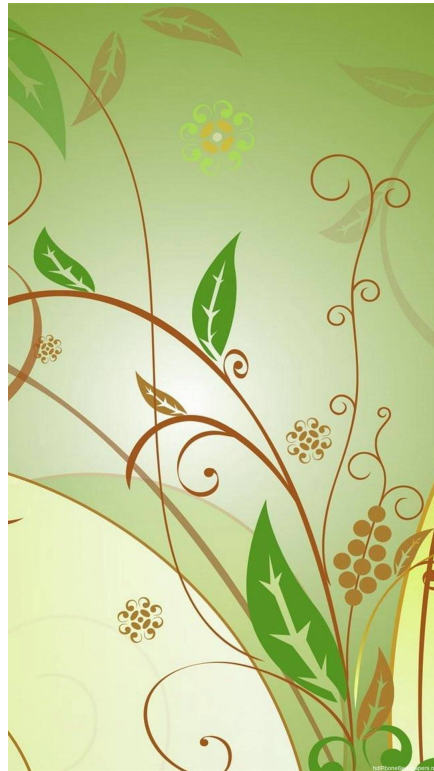
Further Self-Inquiry to see how you do not actually pass through those 3 States is what is called for. What is found is that these 3 states actually revolve in you. So who are you? Finally see that there is no cause for these 3 states. There is just one homogeneous, formless Consciousness, & you are *That*. *That* is how the Self-Inquiry should proceed. What you need to do is actually inquire within yourself & ascertain your identity as this Consciousness that is being described.

Reasoning easily supports Non-Duality. But what you need to do is actual Self-Inquiry. Otherwise you may feel that your nature is Consciousness, that all this is the rising or appearing, that it is the Abiding Reality of Consciousness, but this "other thing" (Ego-Individuality) "comes & goes".

That may be a wonderful place to start, but it is a miserable state declare as the "Final Reality". It is a splendid place to start Meditation. It points you to the *subjective* direction, but how much *objective* definition is still being superimposed on the Subject ?

There is an "I". There is some *instrument* (Ego-Mind) taken to be the "I" that is *perceiving* all of "this". If "this" means the World, that means you might there must be a Mind (*to know it*), & a particular state of Mind – *Waking* (where / when the World is perceived)– & also thought activity, Sense organs, Sense perception & all that is needed for the World appear.

Again, skipping the Self-Inquiry, the above is "*a splendid place to start Meditation; a wonderful place to start, but it is a miserable state declare as the Final Reality.*" .



Reality 145

It is true that all is Consciousness. However if we want to see the truth of such statements as: "All this is *Brahman*" ; "All this is Consciousness" as declared in texts like the *Ribhu Gita*, we must also see the Teaching proceeding such statements. First there is the total negation of "all this". Then it is said: "All this is only *Brahman*" – meaning that what was there actually the entire time was only *Brahman*, the vast Absolute.

The instruction does not mean that we should be repeating to ourselves about this or that item, such as "this clock is not a clock. The clock is Consciousness, & so on." In one sense such would be true. Deeply inquiring, the question is how did Consciousness become a "clock"? If this is so, Consciousness has become a changeable thing. The idea seems to split the Self off into 2 & become things, even though such would be to parts of the same nature of that Consciousness. Such a theory is not Reality is that is. This might be helpful on the way in, but it is not the Inner Truth.

To know the Inner Truth requires thorough Self-Inquiry. Since the Consciousness seems to be split as Subject & Object, just set aside the notion of Consciousness, & find out *who* it is that actually holds this idea. The Non-Duality of pure Consciousness is Uncreated & Unborn with nothing arising & disappearing & with nothing within & nothing outside it.

Consciousness is not an emptiness. Consciousness is what it *is*, but there is no differentiation. The nature of Consciousness is not such that which we see many things & call them the "One". The nature of Consciousness is not that you become unaware the World, but that you are aware that there is no World. The nature of Consciousness is not that you still think that there is a World, but also that there is a "superseding" Consciousness which somehow makes up all things as well.

You may say, "all this is here." By what power do you know quote "here" ? Where is the "here" ? In what Space is the entire Space of the Universe ? Does Consciousness have parts in it? Is there a Universe part, or World part, & the Perceiver part? Does Consciousness give rise to anything ? Is that his nature ? Is Consciousness something from which other things spring out ? Do you view the Supreme as a Source ? Does the so-called *Rope* give rise to the presumed *Snake*?

Look from the position of the *Rope*. That is Self-Knowledge. Otherwise you think, "it is happening here." "Here" is a combination of what ? If your Mind suddenly falls asleep while you are perceiving "here", what happens to your "here" ? If the "here" then disappears, then it is not Real. If merely changing your State of Mind, or redirecting your thought, can alter it, how could that here be Real ? How could that be the Truth, or the enlightened experience ?

If you think "here", we should find out where actually is the "here" ? If you think, "it is all this physical Space", in what *Space* is the physical Space contained ? If it is in your Mind Space, in what Space is the Mind Space ? Inquire. If it is for the "experiencer", what is the nature of the "experiencer" ?

Whatever the stand one taken, however suddenly taken, *that* determines the experience. If the viewer is *individualized*, there is *this*. Those 3 things appear as described in the *40 Verses on Reality*. The Absolute or God, the Individual, & the World appear it appears as if there is Consciousness [*Para – God!*], which is said to be all. But there is also yourself [*jiva – Individual*] in it, & where there is also this "other thing" [*jagat – World*]. Are these not the same 3 ?

Though Non-Dual terms may be given to this Triad [*Para – God!*; *jiva – Individual*; *jagat – World*], & there may be some coloring with Non-Dual perspectives, which is better than taking these things to be 3 distinct concrete things, they are still regarded as 3.

Ramana Maharshi says: "*The 3 are taken to be 3 only so long as there is the Ego, or "I". When there is no "I", they are not 3. Gain experience for yourself by looking again & again into the "I".*"